1: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
MA11 Kurd MA11

The ordinary houses are mere mud hovels, which give the place an appearance similar to that of an Arab village. Every domestic operation is carried on in public, and the whole family may be seen sleeping on the low flat roofs in full view of neighbours or passers-by.

Kūrdistan is for the most part a barren country, cultivated fields and gardens being found only in the proximity of towns and large villages. With the clansmen pasturage is the only resource, and in summer they wander from highland to highland seeking pasturage and water for their large flocks of sheep. A tribe on the march is a picturesque sight. The baggage is carried on the backs of bullocks, which sometimes carry in addition two or three children and the cradle, if the mother has not strapped this with its inmate to her own back. Striding along with the other women may be seen several Amazonian figures, who seem to be in charge of the party, and much more responsible for its safety than the men, who saunter along carrying only their arms, a heavy mace hanging from their girdles, and a sword and buckler at their backs. Beyond guarding the flocks, the men take no part in the work connected with them, all of which devolves on the women.

Kūrds seldom eat the flesh of their flocks, which they consider too valuable for consumption, but content themselves for the most part with the dairy produce, milk, cheese, and butter, curds and *yaourt*, with thin cakes baked in the *tandour*, and a kind of pilaf made from wheat instead of rice. Butter is made in a very primitive fashion. A large sheepskin

1: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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539 that one can well do without gold and rich stuffs, but that without soldiers one cannot maintain one's power.

562 The Kūrdish women, of the nomad tribes more especially, take a lively interest in the social and political affairs of the tribe, are acquainted with all that concerns it—its feuds, plans, and conspiracies, in which they are indeed often moving spirits. As enterprising and indefatigable as the men of their race, they are ever on the alert, and ready to leap to the [492] saddle, where, though not elegant riders, they are quite at home, and able to keep up with their husbands in their adventurous wanderings.

This participation in the political life of the tribe is a peculiarity of nomad life, and of a primitive state of society. Mr. Millingen relates two instances which came under his personal notice of the intervention of women in public affairs. After a skirmish with the [721 Shikiah tribe, the beaten Kūrds retired to their en- 727] campment, with the loss of twenty-four of their warriors, and sent with all haste a deputation to the Pasha of Van imploring his mediation. A kind of commission being despatched on their behalf from this town, it was met at a distance of several miles from the Shikiah camp by a crowd of women, the pretty ones at the head wearing black veils, and shrieking as loudly and woefully as it was in their [728] power to do. Their lively grief, backed by a bribe of the Kūrdish delicacy called *djadjk*,[1] was successful in bringing about a solution favourable to the tribe, which, through the mediation of the women, was allowed to escape further punishment.

[1] The onion-flavoured cheese above-mentioned (p. 120).

The local
mountain partridge (Kurdish, chikaw) makes a regularly favored dish, and is clubbed or snared. Wolves are occasionally shot in winter for their pelts, and a few furs may always be seen hanging in the shops of merchants in Rowanduz. Snow leopards and bears are only rarely encountered. Numerous stories surround bears and their predilection for honey. They are thought to be in some way akin to humans, and tales of their abduction of women for mates are frequent. Fishing, carried on with nets or bombs of blasting powder, is similarly limited, and the largest catch is a type of carp.

Animal husbandry constitutes one of the most important activities of the area, because wool and skins are two of its few valuable exports. The animals so utilized are the black-haired goat and fat-tailed sheep, the latter often stained with some mark in red ochre as a "brand." From the sheep and goats wool, skins, flesh, and milk are obtained. Cattle have utility as beasts of burden, and are only rarely slaughtered for their meat. The dairy products of all these animals constitute a large part of the daily diet as milk, mast (artificially curdled milk, yoghurt), butter, and cheese. Gi or clarified butter is commonly used in cooking, in competition with industrially produced vegetable oil, and is prepared by agitating a milk-filled sheepskin suspended from a wooden tripod and allowing the butter to melt. It has been noted that the kotchir or nomads seem to act as shepherds for the entire area, but they do not exercise an exclusive monopoly, for almost

every village maintains its own little flock and its shepherd. In addition, individual households make a practice of buying animals to fatten for slaughter, for example, for the feast that ends Ramadan, and they wander freely in the yards and streets, usually given into the care of a youngster. Poultry and eggs are of similar dietary importance to the villager, and chicken, ducks, geese, and turkeys are kept in large numbers. Mountain partridges, the chikaw spoken of above, are often penned in small cages for fattening. Poultry are usually left to forage for themselves, and almost every household has a number of chickens pecking for nourishment in its yard. One street in Rowanduz, to the fearful exclusion of dogs and bypassers, was entirely dominated by a huge rooster.

For drawing the plough oxen are commonly used. Donkeys and mules are occupied with the transportation of burdens, sometimes far out of proportion to the size and apparent capacity of the animal. Only the Nestorian Christians seem to pack horses, unlike the Kurd or Arab. It is interesting that muleteers, like their compatriots in Europe and America, often carry on extended monologues with their beasts, quite oblivious to the amusement of listeners. One such speech, addressed to a donkey by a young driver and transcribed at the time ran, in part, as follows: "Go along, uncle (khalo), go along. Why are you so slow today? Why are you no longer a friend to me? Ullah! watch out! You nearly broke into that shop. Come along, uncle, you will have me killed one day." Horses, mules, and donkeys

are utilized for riding. One finds here a revealing comparison with the Arab South. In such a country as Egypt it is commonplace to see a man perched on a donkey while his wife shuffles along behind on foot. In the Rowanduz district, the man walks and the woman rides, a contrast which was several times pointed out by Kurds themselves as evidence of their loftier respect for their women. Almost every village possesses a large number of watchdogs, the typical animal large and fawn-coloured, not unlike an Eskimo husky. In many cases their ears have been cut off, and there are two stories to account for this practice. One holds that it enables the dog to hear prowlers more acutely, and the other claims that the severed ears should be fed to the puppies to make them more ferocious. The town of Rowanduz is more or less taken over by its dog population at night, packs of them running without the houses and environs, often raising a disturbing uproar with their quarrels. They sometimes appear dangerous, but have great respect for a thrown stone. A Kurd approaching a farmhouse will generally equip himself with a handful of pebbles. Dogs are usually ignored after they reach maturity, fending for themselves, but puppies are fondled and made much of by both children and adults. Cats are conspicuous in their absence. It might be mentioned here that, aside from chikaw kept for fighting and dogs, the only other animals kept for amusement are ground-squirrels, carried by some in a pocket and danced on the end of a cord in the chaykhana for the diversion of other customers.

492 ● [562] 231 [825]

does not command a high price, but provides plenty of leisure and social intercourse. The barber, as in Europe or America, is a notorious channel of gossip, and, albeit poor, thinks of himself as a person of some importance in the community. 305 [521] [554]

Much miscellaneous transport is required for short distances by a town such as Rowanduz, for example, of building materials or firewood, and a number of men find employment as muleteers, furnishing their own beasts and working by contract. "Muleteer" is a misnomer, inasmuch as both mules and donkeys are in use, the latter animal even thought preferable by reason of its cheapness and docility. Little harness is used, and the secret of loading the beasts consists in dividing the load and balancing it across the back on the animal's flanks, tied up in bundles, as with wood, or stitched in twin burlap sacks. Brightly-coloured saddle-bags of heavy woven wool, not unlike rugs in texture, may be purchased, and many animals are caparisoned with tassels and other decorations. The muleteer keeps his animal near or within his house at night, and their departure from the bazar on a variety of commissions is a feature of early morning. 492

For longer distances and heavier loads, particularly the great quantity of materiel which comes from Erbil, the town has the use of two lorries. One belongs to a local entrepreneur, Hasan Nopal, who is also its driver, and who was in 1951 under contract to the government on road 494 [493] [499]

2: Masters E-5 (1951) 1953 MA11 Kurd MA11
Rowandux

people and supervising the entertainment. A party of men is assembled at the home of the bridegroom, and the bridegroom himself is seated on a horse. This group, leading the animal, makes its way through the town, accompanied by shouting, music, and the noise of rifles fired in the air. Arriving at the house of the maiden, the bridegroom dismounts and is led inside with his followers to be offered food and drink. A second group, made up of the bride and her female relatives and friends, is formed, and the bride also mounts an extravagantly caparisoned horse. A more striking procession now begins, headed by the bridegroom and his men. Following these are the bride, her relatives and friends, and the rear is brought up by donkeys and porters carrying the new household goods, clothing, and other treasures in brightly painted chests. The Kurds take great delight in discharging firearms on such occasions, and permission for this must be obtained from the government. When the bride of a chieftain was taken by automobile to Batas from Rowandux, several thousand rounds were fired in the air along the route. The bridegroom arrives at his parental home before the bride, and takes up a station on the roof or balcony, furnished with a tray filled with grain, coins, and candy. When the bride is led up on her horse, he showers the contents of this tray over her and her women. As she dismounts, a sheep is slaughtered before the door of the house and her shoe is dipped in its blood before she can enter.

The consummation of the marriage is usually deferred

Masters E-5 (1951) 1953 MA11 Kurd MA11
Rowandus

doors at some favored spot, such as the waterfall of Baykhal, and there is dancing accompanied by flutes and drums. It might be mentioned that on these days, as well as Jayjani Qurban, many persons, particularly the girls, stain their hands with henna, just as at a wedding. 527 [53] [302]

The second observance is concerned with the curious figure of Khidir Elyas and takes place in the autumn. "The mulla has nothing to say about Khidir Elyas, nor does he tell the people when the days come. A few people do not recognize these days." Khidir Elyas (Arabic, Khidir, "the Green One," and Elyas, Elijah) is a peculiar character of folklore, the belief in whom is singularly widespread in the Middle East. He has been discussed in some detail in a large number of works treating popular religion in the Islamic world, and appears to be a synthesis of such heroes of romance as Gilgamesh, Moses, Elijah, and Alexander the Great.[1] In Upper Egypt there are supposed to be two persons who travel together, Khidir and Elyas, and in other places only the one. His salient characteristics are his power to confer blessings and his immortality, for he is believed to have drunk from the Fountain of Life. The following narrative was recorded in Rowandus: [183] 773 776

> Khidir Elyas is a holy man who lives forever. He walks at night and chases away evil spirits. Whoever experiences misfortune need only cry out to him for aid. One night I was bringing a load of rice to Rowanduz by mule. The mule lost his footing and fell. I shouted, "O Khidir Elyas, I have [492]

[1] For example, Tritton, 1951, p. 49.

4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

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Fig. 17. Housebuilding. Clay and water are kneaded with the feet. Pebbles for foundations are transported by donkey. Topzawa.

342 made of pebbles laid in a trench, a wall is put up composed of clay bricks, 1½ bricks thick. This is
333 done with the help of an outstretched horizontal cord, but no spirit level or such like is used to assure that the wall is plumb, and the ground is not levelled. A mixture of clay and water is used as mortar. Whereas the men knead the clay and transport to the building site the water, stones and heavy poplar
[467] trunks for the roofs, the women assist in the transportation of the dried clay bricks and the stacking of them. The window apertures can be rectangular and, like the door opening, bounded above by horizontal wooden sticks. Arched window openings, on the other hand, are formed by loosely and unsystematically stacking bricks in a vertical rectangular opening in the wall. These bricks are covered on top by a sack or such like on which bricks are placed in a semicircle. When the clay mortar holding the bricks together dries, the irregularly-stacked clay bricks and the sack are removed, whereby a window aperture, bounded above by a semicircle, results. Arched window openings can
342 be uncovered or covered by a lattice of flat wooden shavings, which allows in the light, but no stranger's gaze. This lattice is flush with the outside of the wall. The arched windows can also be fitted with wooden shutters which, when locked, are flush with the inside of the wall. Window frames

4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

be residents of Topzawa, where I never saw them veiled. Nor did I ever observe them using the head cloth or the sleeves of the costume to cover the face even if there were male strangers in the vicinity, which Granqvist mentions as being a part of women's pattern of behaviour in Palestine[11].

On the other hand for both the educated and uneducated in the town the over-garment and veil was an indispensible part of women's dress outside the home. It was unthinkable that any woman in a town like Sulaimani or the smaller trading centre, Halabja, could leave the home, shut off completely from the street, without taking with them its seclusion in the form of the *abd-o-pēčē*. These two articles of clothing were obligatory for every girl from the age of 13–14. One of the adolescent daughters in the home of my interpreter had reached this age without it being realised until her father caught sight of her one day, when, clad in a far too tight, washed-out and very slovenly European summer dress, she was about to disappear through the street door, and at once sent one of the women in the house to the *sūq* to buy the necessary *abd* and veil. The following day the girl had vanished forever from the town's street scene and an anonymous female figure appeared instead. Women of both the educated and uneducated urban milieu upheld the town practice of concealment when visiting villages. A sister of Sheikh Taifūr of Topzawa, a woman in her fifties, paid a long visit to her brother. She clad herself in *abd* and veil in order to walk from Topzawa to another village in the neighbourhood. As nobody in this covering over carried any burden, she was accompanied on this occasion by an 8 year old daughter of the house who walked behind her on the mountain track carrying a bundle containing gifts. On the day I engaged her, my interpreter arrived at Topzawa closely veiled. She also brought with her by mule over the Charmahand pass her black over-garment, and managed in some remarkable way to get this around her as, in the dusk, with a flock of sheep streaming past the legs of our riding animals like a dark flood, we entered the small village of Sargale nestling in a valley behind the mountains. She also sent her 13 year old brother, her invariable companion, back to to the Sheikh's house at Topzawa to fetch her over-garment and veil when, returning from a visit to the neighbouring village of Rakawa, we discovered that in our absence male guests had been received on the loggia of the guest house. Apart from that she did not wear *abd* and veil after the first day in the village. Town women thus took with them and used on isolated occasions in the villages the veil and over-garment worn in an urban milieu.

Distribution of veil types inside the four milieus.

Veil type	Village urban milieu		Nomadic village		Educated urban		Uneducated urban	
	unmarried	married	unmarried	married	unmarried	married	unmarried	married
Triangular cloth + shoulder veil falls		+		+		(+)		+
Head cloth	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Ochre bridal veil		?		+				?
European white bridal veil						+		
Face veil Mask	(+)	(+)	(+)	(+)	+	+	+	+

majority of the population are Khanaqin, Kifri, Koi Sanjaq, Ruwandiz, Aqra, Amadiya, Dohuk and Zakho. Kirkuk city is very mixed but contains a large Kurdish element. The professional and intellectual classes, as well as the larger land-owners, tend, as would be expected, to collect in the towns, and there is always a steady drift of these out of Kurdistan to Baghdad.

The rural element consists for the most part of settled villagers; the nomads, once numerous, now form only a small proportion of the whole. Though not all villagers are in fact tribesmen, the organization of society outside the towns may be said, for all practical purposes, still to be essentially tribal, with groups of villages owing a kind of feudal allegiance to a landlord, a Shaykh of one of the dervish fraternities, or a tribal Agha who may have imposed himself on the village by force. With the progressive consolidation of the authority of the administration, and with the spread of education, the villagers have not unnaturally begun to refuse to submit to the impositions, sanctioned by ancient custom perhaps but not enforceable at law, by which these barons, especially the Aghas having no title to the land, were accustomed to maintain their position. In many parts of the country the old social organization is breaking down.

II.

The south-western boundary of Iraqi Kurdistan runs for most of its length across the plain. But immediately to the north-east of the line the ground begins to rise, first as a maze of foothills, and then in a series of long, parallel, limestone ridges running from south-east to north-west, each loftier than the last, up to the main chain of Zagros, which over much of its length marks the Persian frontier. In the extreme north-west these ranges merge into the eastern extension of the Taurus system. On the Persian frontier there are many peaks of over 10,000 feet. It follows that there is a great variety of climatic conditions. The country is traversed by three important affluents of the Tigris, the Great Zab from Turkey, and the Little Zab and the Sirwan (Diyala) from Persia.

A railway from Baghdad following closely the line of the old highroad through Kifri and Kirkuk to Arbil serves Kurdistan south of the Great Zab; the main line up the right bank of the Tigris links Mosul directly with Baghdad and, as already mentioned, skirts the Kurdish districts of the extreme north-west. Most of the market towns are now accessible by automobile. Transportation in the remoter highlands and between villages is by mule and donkey; oxen are still used by the nomads as beasts of burden.

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